

Overall, the *Biographical Dictionary* is bound to be remembered as one of the most ambitious and well-executed projects of Czech and Slovak historiography of the previous decade. The volume is bound to become a standard reference point for generations of historians, as well as the general public. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is certainly one of the most interesting organizations of 20th century communism, and its international impact and significance guarantee that this book will be of interest not only to domestic audiences, but also globally, including of course the countries of former Yugoslavia, with whom the Czechoslovaks had had particularly close ties throughout different periods of the previous century.

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Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius. *Imaging and Mapping Eastern Europe. Sarmatia Europea to Post-Communist Bloc*.
New York – London: Routledge, 2021, 235.

The classics in the field of imagining and mental mapping of Eastern Europe, such as Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans* or Vesna Goldsworthy's *Inventing Ruritania*, and to a lesser degree Larry Wolff's *Inventing Eastern Europe*, focus on texts. Even the newer additions to the study of representations of Eastern Europe such as Diana Mishkova's *Beyond Balkanism*, keep this focus with an occasional analysis of an image or map. This is exactly why Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, Associate Professor at the Department of History of Art at Birkbeck college, University of London, puts "images, art and non-art alike" at the centre of research. This *lacunae* is the reason why the author finds it necessary to add to a cramped field of representations of Eastern Europe, that "other Europe", that was defined as the mirror image of Western Europe through the supposed "lack" of civilization, enlightenment, progress, freedom.

The book is an organic one, coming together from decades long research that Murawska-Muthesius did under the influence of the school of iconology. The long writing process of the book might be the explanation of why the author is careful not to use a simplified application of the postcolonial discourse analysis to the region which results in a layered study of the images of the Eastern Europe. The introduction (*Welcome to Slaka*) and conclusion (*Farewell to Slaka*) rounds up the book, referring to the imaginary Eastern European country of "Slaka" from Malcom Bradbury's 1983. novel *Rates of Exchange*. It serves as a handy metaphor for the shifting imaginaries of the region.

The second chapter, *Mapping Eastern Europe*, is an in-depth study of maps of the region which "kept testifying to the shifting political landscapes". Reaching as far back as renaissance renderings of Ptolemy's knowledge of the

area, then marked as “Sarmatia Europea”, the author shows how the region of “Eastern Europe” changed its borders, meanings, content and how the maps reflected the knowledge, assumptions, but also the ideology of their makers. Far from being simple representations of landscape, they ordered Eastern Europe in such a way that by the rise of ethnography in 19th century the region became the “land of the folk” and the “realm of peasants”. While this chapter examines the influence of some of the more “famous” maps (such as Halford Mackinder’s and Woodrow Wilson’s) what is especially important is that the author shows how Eastern Europe “mapped itself”. She includes Polish, Russian and Czech maps. The frenzy of mapmaking reached its peak in the Paris Peace Conference, where the mapping of the “Balkans” new nations such as Yugoslavia proved especially important and problematic. Murawska-Muthesius underlines that Cold War cartography thrived in newspapers. She is careful not to overemphasize the use of the term “Eastern Europe”, arguing it was not universally accepted. The author gives the example of the influential *National Geographic*, where the region is named “Central Europe including the Balkan States”. What I would especially like to single out is the apt use of Cold War atlases, both from the East and the West, to position the shifting imaginaries of the region.

The third chapter, *The Lure of the Ethnic Dress*, follows travelogues and their attempts to create a strong image of a “land of peasants” with “disorderly peasant rituals” as the crux of the process of imaging. Essentialising the region and its peoples was done through photographing “ethnic” dresses, perpetuating the 18-19th centuries popular “tables of ethnicities”, visualizing different peoples and their “national attributes”. This was particularly noticeable in the ample photographic essays and attachments of the *National Geographic*, where photography made up about half of the magazine’s content. With the “Kodak revolution” of the 1930s and the wider availability of photography, this medium was used as “proof” of the deeply entrenched positions of travellers about the “true nature” of Eastern Europe. The author pinpoints how the ethnic body, and especially the body of the Eastern European female peasant, was used to imbue various meanings to the entire region, but also simplify regional politics and patronize entire countries.

The fourth chapter, titled *Mr Punch Draws Eastern Europe*, focuses on the famous British magazine *Punch* and its influential and widely used and circulated images, which reached its record print run of 175,000 copies at the height of the Cold War, in 1948. Murawska-Muthesius rightly claims that a metaphorical group portrait of the region was the image of a bunch of children in “ethnic” costumes, “disciplined by Dame Europa, Hitler or Stalin”. The author reminds us of the power of cartoons and caricatures which “have been contributing to the articulation and strengthening of the values of the majority, be it Catholic, Protestant, white, western European, patriarchal, hetero-sexual, or militantly secular.” What follows is a complex study of the images created in the West. The examples range from images found in the German *Simplicissimus* in the 19th century, to those found in the British *The Economist* in the late 20th, with a very well thought out counterpoint titled “Eastern Europe Strikes Back”. The author utilizes her knowledge of Eastern European magazines such as the Polish *Szpilki* (*Pins*), East German *Frischer Wind*

(*A fresh breeze*), Czech *Dikobraz* (*Porcupine*), Hungarian *Lúdas Matyi* (*Goose Boy*), Romanian *Urzica* (*Nettles*), and Bulgarian *Starshel* (*Hornet*), the Soviet *Krokodil* (*Crocodile*), with a particular emphasis on the image of the “Imperial Warmonger” in the Cold War, to show the agency of the oft-patronized Eastern Europeans who used the same medium to respond and invent new images of the “West”.

The last thematic chapter, *The Battle of the Dust Jackets*, is arguably the most innovative. Following the writings of the French literary theorist Gérard Genette (and especially his book *Paratexts*) Murawska-Muthesius examines book covers and dust jackets which, in word and specifically image, conveyed the message of the book, the intent of the writer and designer, but also revealed the essentialisation of the region. The author approached the covers as “political allegories”, showing how the dust jackets followed and indeed, still follow, political and historiographical trends presenting varied images of the region. The coinciding of the rise of photography-based covers in the 1990s with the boom of books about East Central Europe following the fall of communism, the Yugoslav wars and the ascent of the nation-states to the European Union, was a fertile ground for this research, with the author examining some 500 academic titles about history, politics, economics, society, art in eastern Europe.

Murawska-Muthesius shows how the inclusion of maps and images is important for the understanding of analysis, so the book is amplified with a large number of images and maps, which is especially important given the restrictions, copyright and other problems researchers encounter in their studies of the region. Given the diverse source base, perhaps the next edition would benefit from a longer conclusion, which is too short here. *Imaging and Mapping Eastern Europe. Sarmatia Europea to Post-communist Bloc* is a valuable contribution to the study of the mental mapping of the region, which brings methodological and empirical innovations to the field, and equally important, should point future researchers towards giving equal attention to images and maps in the study of the region. The author of this review would like to thank professor Murawska-Muthesius and her publisher for kindly providing a review copy.

Nemanja RADONJIĆ

Caroline Mezger. *Forging Germans. Youth, Nation and the National Socialist Mobilization of Ethnic Germans in Yugoslavia 1918–1944*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

Scholarly literature on the Volksdeutsche in Yugoslavia has grown substantially over time. Indeed, it becomes increasingly difficult to say something really new. Even the good quality works increasingly tell the old, already known story. Caroline Mezger’s book (that came out as the abbreviated version of her